in co-operative work, while the system of recruiting inspectors, who form the backbone of the department, cannot be considered free from defect. The work that lies ahead for the department is difficult and complicated, and Government are giving their most careful consideration to the whole question.

15. Geology.—The Department of Geology is an indispensable handmaid to the Department of Industries, and more especially so in a country like Travancore, which is believed to have vast potential mineral resources. This department, although manned by an expert whose knowledge of Geology and applied Chemistry is up-to-date, has not been working on economic lines, and has been rendering but little contribution to the acceleration of industrial expansion in the State. Government have recently issued instructions to the State Geologist to change his methods of work, and instead of confining himself to scientific research, to supplement it by an examination of the chief mineral resources of economic value, and to submit practical proposals for the industrial utilisation of such resources. The staff of the Geologist will be so strengthened as to enable him to carry out this work side by side with the conduct of scientific research.

16. Excise.—I do not propose to detain you long on the subject of Excise. This Department, as I have already said, did exceedingly well under Mr. N. Raman Pillai, the late Commissioner, and is run on approved lines, and no radical changes appear to be called for in the methods of its work. A great deal has already been done to give an impetus to the manufacture of home salt, and about 150 acres of land have recently been added to the salt-producing area of the State. Nothing appreciable, however, has been done to prevent the deterioration of the existing salt pans as a result of the percolation of water from the Kodayar channels. This question has now been taken up for solution by the Government and orders have been issued for the execution of the works necessary for keeping off such water from the salt pans.

17. Arrack and Molasses.—There is one direction in which Government propose to co-ordinate the work of the Excise Department with that of the Department of Industries. This consists in the introduction of a change in the method of arrack distillation in the Government distilleries and especially in the one at Nagercoil. Government are anxious that the very considerable quantities of sugar-cane and palmyra jaggery available in the country should be utilised locally in the manufacture of sugar, and that the distilleries should distil arrack from the waste molasses obtained in the sugar-refining process, in lieu of the present wasteful method of distilling it direct from jaggery. With a view to accomplish this object, Government are inducing capitalists to start a State-aided sugar-refinery, the molasses from which may be taken over by the Government distilleries.

18. Forests.—The Forest Department is one of the major departments of the State, and its activities proceed on well-regulated and well-recognised lines. No important changes are therefore necessary in the matter of its administration. One or two defects, such as the sale of timber-growth by coupes, which were the features of the administration of this department by his predecessor in office, have already been rectified by the present Conservator. The contribution by the Forest Department to the State exchequer which averages Rs. 15 lakhs a year cannot, however, be said to be adequate when the richness and the vastness of our forest area are considered, and the direction in which future action is clearly called for is the utilisation, to greater effect, of the economic resources of the forests and the adoption of methods of accelerating natural regeneration, including the replacement of forest products extracted for economic purposes. In other words, an economic survey of our forests has become a matter of imperative necessity, and such survey, in order to be useful, must be undertaken by a forest economist of proved ability and experience. Having ascertained the economic value of the several forest products together with the extent of their available supply, it will be the turn for the Forest Utilisation Officer to suggest measures for the conversion of those products into marketable articles, and the Sylviculturist will have to suggest measures for the recuperation of the exploited forests. The Madras Government and the State of Mysore have been for

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some time past conducting operations on these lines, and it is time that Travancore, so fortunately situated in the possession of its forest wealth, followed suit. Government are anxiously considering the best method of approaching the problem.

19. Public Works.—A well-organised and efficient Department of Public Works has always been one of the praiseworthy features of the administration of Travancore. It is, however, a matter for regret that, owing to the financial stringency experienced by the State as a result of the war, Government were unable in recent years to utilise the services of the department to the maximum advantage. The pre-war allotment of about Rs. 37 lakhs a year under the head of public works had to be reduced by about Rs. 10 lakhs a year during the period of the war. It should now be the chief aim of the Government to provide an adequate allotment for expenditure on public works, especially water-ways and roads, which contribute so materially to the comfort and convenience of the public and facilitate the transport of commodities. During 1095, the expenditure under Public Works was allowed to go up to nearly Rs. 33 lakhs, and during the current year, special grants to the extent of nearly Rs. 3 lakhs have already been sanctioned over and above the budgetted provision of Rs. 32 lakhs, on such highly useful works as the Shertallay and Tiruvalla canals and special repairs to certain important roads. The Chief Engineer thinks that, in view of the general all-round increase in the cost of labour and material, his department will not be able to carry out as much work as was done in the past without a budget allotment of Rs. 40 lakhs per annum. Many of the taluks in Central and North Travancore are still lacking in good roads, while the opening up of the High Range Division with its immense possibilities of economic development and the profitable extraction of valuable timber from State forests are considerably retarded by the absence of adequate communications. While on this topic, Government have very great pleasure in expressing their appreciation of the co-operation extended to them by the people in certain parts of the State in the matter of opening up new communications and maintaining old ones. To cite only one instance, the Kallupara Swadesabhivardhini Sangham has constructed some fifty miles of road in the course of the last few years. What the Sangham has done is to give the land free and execute earthwork, leaving the State to carry out the necessary masonry work and give the finishing touches to the roads. Again, people who live in villages connected by minor roads with main roads have come forward with proposals to maintain the former, subject to the grant of a subsidy from Government. Government realise that the maintenance of such roads can be attended to by the villagers concerned far more cheaply and efficiently than the Public Works Department which has to work from a distance. The Chief Engineer has been requested to give every support to these praiseworthy popular movements. Government have no doubt that the problem of high prices and increased cost of labour can be successfully met to a degree by the transference of the execution of such works to the people on the spot.

20. Railways.—While we are on the subject of communications, it is but fitting that the question of the extension of railways should be taken up for consideration. It cannot be denied that Travancore is at present not adequately served in respect of railways. It will be of interest to you to know that the State of Baroda, with an area and revenue not much larger than ours, and with a population which is only about two-thirds of ours, has a total length of about 535 open miles of railway against the 100 miles owned by Travancore. It is needless to point out that the advent of a railway has invariably the effect of opening up and enriching the country served by it in a variety of ways, and it so happens that in Travancore the tracts not yet tapped by railways are some of the most valuable and populous in the whole State. The expansion of our railways and the creation of a State Railway Department are matters which cannot be put off very long, especially in view of the approaching development of the Cochin Port and of the fact that that port draws most of its supplies from this country. Government have accordingly decided to have a reconnaissance survey made of three lines of railways, one connecting the High Range with the Cochin Port and running throughout within Travancore territory, another connecting the same port with a convenient point on the Shencottah-Quilon line and running through the most populous tracts and important towns in that part of the

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